

Trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Recovery in *War and Peace*: The Case of Nikolai Rostov

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In the last several years in the United States, there has been an increasing focus on and concern for the psychological casualties of war. Because of medical advances, the chances today of a soldier surviving a battlefield injury are far greater than in any previous war. Many of those who have had combat experience, physically injured or not, return home from war with psychological scars that wreak havoc in their everyday lives. They are usually diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a category of psychological illness that was not recognized by the psychiatric profession until 1980, when it was first included in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)*. Before 1980, PTSD had gone under many different names, including battle fatigue, shell shock, combat exhaustion, and war neurosis. Jonathan Shay estimates that twenty years after the USA left Vietnam, approximately 250,000 soldiers were still suffering severe symptoms of PTSD (xix). Since the Iraq war began, over fifty thousand troops have been diagnosed with PTSD.

Recently the number of suicides among military personnel has increased dramatically:

About twenty-eight veterans kill themselves each day. Thousands from the current wars have already done so. In fact, the number of United States soldiers who have died by their own hand is now estimated to be greater than the number (6,460) who have died in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. (Swofford 29)

It has therefore become a priority of the military and the mental health communities to identify and provide psychological help to soldiers suffering from battlefield trauma. To this end, the military has enlisted the services of imaginative literature, organizing the production and discussion of Greek tragic plays such as Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, which depict the psychological effects of "wartime experiences" on several of the greatest heroes of the Trojan War. Earlier, Shay had attempted to use the behavior of Achilles in Homer's *Iliad* as a tool for understanding the terrible acts committed by rank-and-file soldiers in Vietnam, acts that he viewed as directly resulting from battlefield trauma.

But what about Tolstoy, whose *War and Peace* is considered by many to be the greatest novel about war ever written? Tolstoy served with the army in the Caucasus in varying capacities from the middle of 1851 to the end of 1852. Later, he commanded, for about six weeks from April 3 to May 15, 1855, an artillery battery in Sevastopol, where he served on a schedule of four days on and eight days off (Simmons 113). He thus was witness to some of the terrible devastation inflicted on both soldiers and civilians during relentless enemy bombardments. From 1852–55 he published several well-received stories based on his military service both in the Caucasus and in the Crimean War.

War and Peace includes descriptions of numerous skirmishes and detailed presentations of several of the most important battles of the Napoleonic Wars, some of which were also based on his military service. In the battles of Austerlitz and Borodino, thousands are seriously wounded, maimed, and killed.

Each of the novel's three heroes participates in the wars in different capacities. All have traumatic experiences. Prince Andrei Bolkonsky is seriously injured in each of the major battles of the war—at Austerlitz and Borodino. Pierre Bezukhov, though a civilian, spends several months as a prisoner of war, barely escaping execution for his alleged role in setting incendiary fires in occupied Moscow. Nikolai Rostov participates in several skirmishes and battles, and it is through his eyes at Austerlitz that we see some of the most horrific scenes of battlefield carnage.

Though each of the heroes is worth a study of his own in relation to psychological trauma, Nikolai Rostov presents the best case for an analysis of battlefield PTSD. Prince Andrei and Pierre Bezukhov have highly unusual responses to trauma. After each of his injuries, Prince Andrei experiences, most importantly, peace and enlightenment. His despondency between his injuries results not from trauma but from his

disillusionment with politics and disappointment in love. Pierre never enters the military; he observes the action at Borodino as an interested observer. After having been liberated as a prisoner of war, he falls ill for three months. Upon recovery, he rises a new man with a sense of freedom and happiness almost as all-encompassing as Andrei's. After trauma, Andrei and Pierre seem to experience the exact opposite of PTSD.

Nikolai is different. He participates as a soldier in both the early and later stages of the war. He is slightly wounded when his horse is shot out from under him in 1805, and he captures a French soldier in 1812. He is a witness to some of the war's most horrendous slaughter in the battle of Austerlitz. In 1807, after the cessation of hostilities, he experiences profound disillusionment and depression when he witnesses the aftereffects of the war on its participants—from the common peasant soldier to the tsar. We have a detailed description of his life in the epilogue, the events of which take place in 1820, fifteen years after his first battle experience and seven years after his last. One can, as it were, do a longitudinal study in terms of PTSD on Nikolai that one cannot do with either Pierre or Andrei.

Most of the literature about combat trauma deals with short-term and chronic PTSD and its treatment. Understandably, little has been written about those who experienced trauma and have gone on to live normal and productive lives, however changed they may be by their experiences. Nikolai is one of them. His is a history of survival and success. It is a story that is less often told, especially since the twentieth century, but it is a story that needs to be told for it is the story of many if not the majority of veterans. In the recent collection *Tolstoy on War*, Nikolai is mentioned a few times, but rarely discussed (McPeak and Orwin).

Furthermore, we will be better able to understand Nikolai's character and maturation when we see them from the perspective of trauma

and recovery. This understanding is all the more relevant since with the exception of Pisarev's incisive essay (Писарев, "Старое барство") and Brody's article, there has not been a great deal of criticism devoted to Nikolai, especially in comparison with the other major characters. Wasiolek, Christian, Silbajoris, Bailey, and Hagan, just to name a few prominent names, deal very briefly with Nikolai, often using him to demonstrate a particular Tolstoyan literary practice or device. As Saburov writes, "his simple nature makes the analysis of his character difficult" (Сабуров 217–218). He was supposed to be an "ordinary person" (обыкновенный человек).

It is important to be clear about what aspects of PTSD I will be examining in *War and Peace*. PTSD is a controversial subject with disagreements about its etiology and symptoms. After all, in the past combat trauma was most often seen as a defect of character (Gabriel 120). In addition, the definition of PTSD, which was once primarily associated with battlefield trauma, has expanded over the years to include trauma of various kinds—from accidents, natural disasters, rape, terrorist attacks, and child abuse. The acute or chronic symptoms are, among others, depression, fatigue, listlessness, startle reactions, nightmares, phobias, impulsive behavior, suspiciousness, and outbursts of violence related to personal relationships, work, and study. The symptoms of PTSD most commonly develop in the hours or days following the traumatic event, but they can sometimes take weeks, months, or even years before they appear. The traumas of war can differ significantly from other traumas. Soldiers often suffer not only from the injuries they have incurred (their close encounters with death) but from the suffering and devastation they have witnessed and have inflicted on others—especially the killing of innocent civilians. Since the seriousness of trauma is directly related to its intensity and frequency, the battlefield, where traumatic situations can occur on a daily basis and for extended periods, creates an especially fertile

ground for PTSD. Richard Gabriel, who takes an extreme position on PTSD vulnerability, has argued that almost every soldier, whatever his mental condition might have been before he entered service, will experience trauma if he is subjected long enough to repeated battlefield stress (Gabriel 30–31).

Not all war related traumatic stress, however, is of the same kind; nor do similar traumatic experiences necessarily have similar psychological consequences. Soldiers may suffer incapacitating psychological breakdown in battle, a form of PTSD sometimes referred to as "combat stress reaction" or CSR (Solomon 30). However, when CSR is treated *in situ* and soldiers are given rest, food, and shelter, they may return to their units, function well, and never even experience the long-term symptoms of PTSD. To be sure, those who experience psychological breakdown are the most prone to experience chronic PTSD, but they do not always succumb. The obverse is also true: There are soldiers who seem to function well under intense battle conditions and who only later, sometimes much later, experience PTSD.

We have records of what is most certainly psychiatric breakdown (CSR) in combat among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. The medical profession started recording psychiatric breakdown only in the seventeenth century. It was then most often called nostalgia because it was often accompanied by incessant thinking of home. In the early twentieth century, psychiatric collapse was often called shell shock because physicians believed that exploding shells caused brain-altering concussions. It was only in 1905, during the Russo-Japanese War, that Russian physicians began to understand that battlefield breakdown was primarily psychological in origin.

What might have Tolstoy known about PTSD, both psychiatric breakdown and chronic battlefield trauma? He most certainly witnessed instances of psychiatric breakdown since he was in active service for several years in the Caucasus and served

six weeks in a besieged bastion during the siege of Sevastopol (April 3–May 15, 1855). Total psychiatric breakdown in battle resulting in incapacity to perform one's duty has always occurred in combat and is apparent to all when it occurs. It often requires, for obvious reasons, immediate evacuation from the front. Most who suffer lesser degrees of trauma try to hide it as best they can. For Israeli soldiers, whose service has always been seen as essential to the survival of the state, battlefield breakdown is viewed almost as a betrayal of a sacred duty (Solomon 161–73). Soldiers who break down experience tremendous loss of self-esteem and shame (Solomon 96) and often refuse to seek therapy (Scurfield 288). Since governments are primarily interested in maintaining morale on the battlefield and the home front, they do not want to make CSR widely known. It is understandable, despite Tolstoy's desire to tell the truth, that he would not focus on psychological breakdown in his fiction. Though he wanted to depict the terror of war, he also wished to show the heroism and patriotism of the common Russian soldier. With regard to chronic PTSD, we do not know if Tolstoy at any time knew of veterans suffering from the effects of psychological trauma long after their combat experience. However, we can assume based on PTSD among veterans of the American Civil War that the incidence of combat-related PTSD was not significantly lower among Russian troops who fought in the Napoleonic and Crimean wars. To do a proper study of Nikolai and trauma, we obviously need to look closely at his war experiences in both phases of the Napoleonic War—in 1805 and 1812—but also at the interwar and postwar periods, since we need to deal with both acute and chronic battlefield trauma.

Nikolai Rostov leaves the university to enter the military service as a cadet just before the War of 1805 begins, joining more because of his emulation of others than his attraction to military life. His friend Boris Dubretskoy has already become an

officer, a member of the highly esteemed Guards unit. Nikolai is a patriotic, idealistic, and enthusiastic volunteer. Like many other raw youths, his understanding of war is based on the limited and fantastical views of his friends and fellow recruits, many of whom are looking forward to their first engagement in order to distinguish themselves in battle, to emerge as Russian heroes. There are also many, such as Boris, whose sole interest in the military is the advancement of their careers; Nikolai is not one of these. When asked on one occasion how he views the upcoming war, Nikolai answers stereotypically, but in character—Saburov (Сабуров 220) calls it primitive but honest patriotism—"I am convinced that we Russians must die or conquer" (66; PSS 9: 77).

Enns

Nikolai's first combat experience occurs at Enns. When he arrives in Austria, the Russians have not yet entered the war. He is stationed in a little Austrian village where the Russian officers mainly engage in drinking, gambling, and carousing.

Nikolai gets into trouble almost immediately, accusing an officer of stealing regimental money from his friend and commander Denisov. Dragomirov (Драгомиров 1–17) discusses Nikolai's role in the Denisov affair, but only to point out the unethical actions of the army in relation to a war hero, Denisov. Nikolai is asked not to make a scandal because it would shame the entire regiment and its commander, Colonel Bogdanich. He reluctantly backs down.

This incident provides the context for his first war engagement at Enns. Nikolai is part of a rear-guard squadron defending a bridge, making sure all the troops and supply wagons safely cross the river. Only about seven hundred yards separate the French and Nikolai's squadron. The main action is psychological, not military. Nikolai's thoughts are focused not on the enemy but on the need to perform well in front of the colonel with whom he had the altercation about the stolen money. "Let

him see whether I am a coward!' he thought." It is part of the military ethic among officers to show unconcern about bullets whizzing past one's head and grapeshot exploding nearby. To do any less is considered cowardice.

Tolstoy describes an incident where a general and a colonel try to outdo each other by subjecting themselves to the most danger (199; PSS 9: 226–27). Nikolai, however, is paying more attention to his real adversary, the colonel, than the French. Later he is placed in a more dangerous situation when his squadron is ordered to go back to the bridge and set it on fire so that the French cannot use it to pursue the Russian troops. Nikolai's squadron becomes the target of enemy artillery. The French get off three rounds of grapeshot before the hussars are able to mount their horses and escape. Three soldiers are hit and fall to the earth—two are injured and one killed. The Russians are fortunate not to have suffered greater casualties.

How did Nikolai perform and what effect did this encounter have on him? On the bridge, Nikolai did little, being too "absorbed by his relations with Bogdanich," his "internal" adversary. Also "there was no one to hew down (as he had always imagined battles to himself), nor could he help to fire the bridge because he had not brought any burning straw with him like the other soldiers" (157; PSS 9: 179). But Nikolai experiences here what all trauma victims do: the feeling of vulnerability, the nearness of death. Solomon points out "combat stress reaction is the culmination and epitome of a process in which the individual is stripped of his sense of safety and mastery and experiences the full thrust of his vulnerability and existential helplessness. The CSR casualty is overwhelmed by the external threat and by his own feelings of impotence" (163–64). Nikolai realizes that the world is beautiful and glorious, but he is in danger of losing it.

At that instant, the sun began to hide behind the clouds, and other stretchers came into view before Rostov. And the fear of death and of the stretchers, and love of the sun and of life, all merged into one feeling of sickening agitation. "O Lord God! Thou who art in that heaven, save, forgive, and protect me!" Rostov whispered. (157; PSS 9: 179)

Further, Rostov, the first time under fire, gets credit for something that he does not think that he deserves. Denisov tells him that being subjected to grapeshot fire is more terrible than any frontal attack. In fact, Nikolai believes that he has acted basely: "It's all over; but I am a coward—yes, a coward" (158; PSS 9: 180). The trauma of his first battle experience is attenuated somewhat by his being praised for his steadiness under fire and by not being noticed by his adversary, the Russian colonel with whom he had the contretemps. Here Nikolai experiences two of the most devastating feelings associated with military trauma: the fear of death and a loss of self-esteem resulting from a belief that one has not acted bravely (Solomon 59, 166–67).

Schöngrabern

Tolstoy does not dwell on Nikolai's first baptism of fire. Enns is a more of a prelude to Nikolai's next combat experience in the most important battle before Austerlitz, the battle of Schöngrabern (Hellabrunn). Here Nikolai's squadron of hussars is "cut off from the line of retreat by the French" and has "to attack in order to cut a way for themselves" (199; PSS 9: 227). It is a situation similar to the firing of the bridge at Enns in that again there is nothing between Nikolai and the enemy. This situation is far more dangerous. Tolstoy describes Nikolai's fear, but also his exhilaration. On some, combat can have an almost drug-like effect, senses heightened by inherent danger, a sense of living on a different level, of experiencing the joy of the terrible.

In *A Rumor of War*, Philip Caputo graphically describes the horrors of combat in Vietnam and gives portraits of those suffering from PTSD, including himself. He admits that despite the horror, he often felt exhilaration unlike any other when going into combat:

Anyone who fought in Vietnam, if he is honest about himself, will have to admit he enjoyed the compelling attractiveness of combat. It was a peculiar enjoyment because it was mixed with a commensurate pain. Under fire, a man's powers of life heightened in proportion to the proximity of death, so that he felt elation as extreme as his dread. His senses quickened, he attains an acuity of consciousness at once pleasurable and excruciating. It was something like the elevated state of awareness induced by drugs. And it could be just as addictive, for it made whatever else life offered in the way of delights or torments seem pedestrian. (xv)

Danger ignites "the life spark in each man's soul" and reveals "what living means" (Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art* 113–14). The "high" is something that Nikolai has often heard from his fellow hussars. Because he is expecting to feel it and because it is felt even by those who are not expecting it, Nikolai experiences elation as he charges the enemy:

Rostov anticipated his horse's movements and became more and more elated. He had noticed a solitary tree ahead of him. This tree had been in the middle of the line that had seemed so terrible—and now he had crossed that line and not only was there nothing terrible, but everything was becoming more and more happy and animated. "Oh, how I will slash at him!" thought Rostov, gripping the hilt of his saber. "Hur-a-a-a-ah!" came a roar of voices. "Let anyone come my way now," thought Rostov driving his spurs into Rook and letting him go at a full gallop so that he outstripped the others. (200; PSS 9: 227–28)

His expectations are not met. His horse is shot out from under him. Covered in blood, he does not know at first that it is the horse's blood, not his own. He has suffered a bad sprain so that his left arm, benumbed, hangs helplessly from his shoulder. When he realizes that a French soldier is approaching him, rather than firing his pistol he flings it at the soldier and runs to the bushes. This experience is different from the one at the Enns bridge.

He did not now run with the feeling of doubt and conflict with which he had trodden the Enns bridge, but with the feeling of a hare fleeing from the hounds. One single sentiment, that of fear for his young and happy life, possessed his whole being. (201; PSS 9: 229).

The French soldier shoots at him but misses, and Nikolai manages to get safely to the bushes where Russian sharpshooters are positioned.

The incident at Schöngrabern takes a greater toll on Nikolai than the one at the Enns bridge. On the Enns bridge, Nikolai hardly knew what was happening. He did not know that the bridge was being attacked with grapeshot. He was also more preoccupied with his spat with the colonel than with the French. Although he thought himself a coward for his action, or lack of action, on the bridge, he was told he had done a good job. Additionally, everyone knew it was his first time in battle. Nikolai was thus somewhat encouraged and seemed more than ready to perform better at his next encounter.

At Schöngrabern, he charges at the enemy. What happens is not what is written in books or talked about. Nikolai flees in terror like a hare. Had he thought he was a coward at Enns, what could he possibly have thought about his behavior at Schöngrabern? All the ingredients for trauma are here. Soldiers often call their being trapped by an object that prevents them from escaping as the source of many later nightmares. Nikolai finds himself for a time under his dead horse. He is

covered in blood; his left arm is paralyzed. From ancient times, the inability to move one's arm during combat is one of the most frequently reported symptoms of trauma, often called "acute hysterical paralysis." Most of all, he is in terror of imminent death as he is pursued by a French soldier.

To compound the trauma, once safe, he does not get immediate treatment. Among the retreating soldiers, many of whom are much more badly injured than he, Nikolai cannot even find a wagon to ride in as he rejoins the army. He is finally given a place to sit; it is completely covered with the blood of an officer who has just died. As Nikolai sits, shivering and in excruciating pain,

the groans and voices of the wounded were more distinctly heard than any other sound in the darkness of the night. The gloom that enveloped the army was filled with their groans. Their groans and the darkness of this night seemed one and the same thing. (208; PSS 9: 237)

Such a space is not the ideal one in which to recover.

In addition to the experience of being trapped, losing feeling in his arm, and sensing the nearness of death, Nikolai displays many other symptoms of war-related trauma, including bad dreams, loneliness (abandonment), and nostalgia, the intense desire to be elsewhere, to be at home. Swiss military physicians in 1678 were among the first to identify and use the term "nostalgia" to designate that constellation of behaviors that make up acute combat reaction, a condition characterized by melancholy, incessant thinking of home, disturbed sleep or insomnia, weakness, loss of appetite, anxiety, cardiac palpitations, stupor, and fever (Bentley). The Greek term *nostalgeō* (νοσταλγεω) refers to the painful desire to return home.

Tolstoy conveys this nostalgia in his transcription of Nikolai's dream-like state after the battle. The trauma is further compounded by

Nikolai's excruciating pain, which prevents him from falling asleep and obtaining relief. Nikolai feels soldiers crushing him and "scorching the flesh of his dislocated arm and shoulder" (212; PSS 9: 241). (The shoulder and arm are not broken, but Nikolai thinks they are.) The soldiers will not go away. In this dream state his mother, Sonya, and Natasha, who represent safety at home, appear alongside Denisov, Telyanin, and the colonel Bogdanich, who signify danger and conflict in an alien place.

When Nikolai opens his eyes, "the black canopy of night" is hanging "less than a yard above the glow of the charcoal" (213; PSS 9: 242). Tushin, who had originally helped him, is not there. The doctor has not come. He is all alone. Tolstoy records his "nostalgia" again.

"Nobody wants me!" thought Rostov. "There is no one to help me or pity me. Yet I was once at home, strong, happy, and loved." He sighed and, doing so, groaned involuntarily.

"Eh, is anything hurting you?" asked the soldier, shaking his shirt out over the fire, and not waiting for an answer he gave a grunt and added: "What a lot of men have been crippled today—frightful!"

Rostov did not listen to the soldier. He looked at the snowflakes fluttering above the fire and remembered a Russian winter at his warm, bright home, his fluffy fur coat, his quickly gliding sleigh, his healthy body, and all the affection and care of his family. "And why did I come here?" he wondered. (213; PSS 9: 242)

The profound disillusionment and despondency following this participation in the battle of Schöngrabern, just as after his baptism of fire at Enns, give way to renewed confidence. He receives a promotion, rises in the esteem of his fellow officers, and is idolized as a hero at home because of the probably exaggerated descriptions he sends his family of the battles in which he

participated. His mother “could not believe that that little creature could be this strong, brave man, this model son and officer that, judging by this letter, he now was” (254; PSS 9: 286–87). Nikolai now can lie about his exploits just as the other officers and make himself out to be a battle-tested veteran superior to those soft, risk-averse staff adjutants like Prince Andrei. For just eight days after having been “injured,” he visits his old friend Boris at Olmütz, thinking “how he would impress Boris and all his comrades of the Guards by his appearance—that of a fighting hussar who had been under fire” (255; PSS 9: 288). He has a bandage on his arm. He tells Boris

how beside himself and all aflame with excitement, he had flown like a storm at the square, cut his way in, slashed right and left, how his saber had tasted flesh and he had fallen exhausted, and so on. And so he told them all that. (260; PSS 9: 298)

What gets Nikolai through the days before the next battle, Austerlitz—in addition to the stories about himself that he has almost come to believe and the restoration of self-esteem through promotion—is his devotion to and willingness to die for the tsar. If Prince Andrei’s greatest desire is to perform a deed of Napoleonic importance for Russia, Nikolai Rostov’s greatest desire is to perish heroically before the eyes of the tsar. Tolstoy presents the desire of Russians to die for their tsar and for the country as something entirely comprehensible, even praiseworthy.

And Rostov got up and went wandering among the campfires, dreaming of what happiness it would be to die—not in saving the emperor’s life (he did not even dare to dream of that), but simply to die before his eyes. He really was in love with the tsar and the glory of the Russian arms and the hope of future triumph. And he was not the only man to experience that feeling during those memorable days preceding the

battle of Austerlitz: nine tenths of the men in the Russian army were then in love, though less ecstatically, with their Tsar and the glory of the Russian arms. (275; PSS 9: 311)

Thus, after both Enns and Schöngrabern, there are counterforces that cushion Nikolai’s trauma. There is adequate rest, food, and shelter. Just as important are the praise of his comrades, increased self-esteem, promotion (Gabriel 133–34), and, most of all, the ideal of self-sacrifice for the motherland and the tsar. If the main cause of wartime trauma is fear of death, there may be no greater balm for trauma than the desire to die in order to attain glory.

Austerlitz

Tolstoy presents Nikolai as looking forward to the next battle, Austerlitz, so he can finally distinguish himself. He requests a transfer from his squadron, which is to be stationed in the rear, to the front line. He not only gets his wish, but is commissioned to carry a message to Kutuzov, the commander-in-chief, and if he cannot find Kutuzov, to the tsar himself.

It is sixteen days since Nikolai was wounded at Schöngrabern, but surprisingly he seems to have completely healed from his injury. Perhaps he suffered a less significant injury that we may have believed (we saw it all from Nikolai’s perspective), arm numbness being a common symptom of traumatic shock that often disappears with rest. Or maybe Tolstoy just needed to get Nikolai healed so that he could perform the role designated for him at Austerlitz. Since Nikolai transverses most of the battlefield on his mission, he can be employed to give the reader a view of the battle superior to that of any other participant.

Wanting to prove himself, especially for the tsar, Nikolai takes significant risks, exposing himself to unnecessary danger on several occasions. He also witnesses scenes of great disfigurement and slaughter, which are meant to have as profound effect on the reader, as on Nikolai. Perhaps the

trauma that is most poignantly evoked from Jonathan Shay's sessions with Vietnam veterans is the one that results not from injuries that they themselves have sustained in battle, but from witnessing the suffering of others, watching their friends die by their side or innocent civilians being killed (33). Watching the slaughter of one's comrades intensifies the feeling of one's own vulnerability as much as any other experience. If it can happen to them, who are just like me, it can also happen to me.

On his long ride to find Kutuzov or the tsar, Tolstoy shows Nikolai experiencing fear for his own life and his ability to carry out his mission as he witnesses the carnage all around him.

All about the field, like heaps of manure on well-kept plow land, lay from ten to fifteen dead and wounded to each couple of acres. The wounded crept together in twos and threes and one could hear their distressing screams and groans, sometimes feigned—or so it seemed to Rostov. He put his horse to a trot to avoid seeing all these suffering men, and he felt afraid—afraid not for his life, but for the courage he needed and which he knew would not stand the sight of these unfortunates [...]. The French, who had ceased firing at this field strewn with dead and wounded where there was no one left to fire at, on seeing an adjutant riding over it trained a gun on him and fired several shots. The sensation of those terrible whistling sounds and of the corpses around him merged in Rostov's mind into a single feeling of terror and pity for himself. He remembered his mother's last letter. "What would she feel," thought he, "if she saw me here now on this field with the cannon aimed at me?" (307; *PSS* 9: 348)

The screaming and groaning of wounded soldiers is probably the most frequent device that Tolstoy uses to foreground the suffering of war. It becomes even more prevalent in the sections

dealing with Prince Andrei after he is wounded at Borodino. Here the horrible groaning and grisly spectacle of the wounded not only add to Nikolai's "feeling of terror and pity for himself," they also threaten his ability to carry on his mission; they threaten psychological breakdown (CSR). If this were not enough, Nikolai fails in his mission. He has an opportunity to deliver his message to the tsar, but does not have the courage to do so when he can. At the end of each of the three battles in which Nikolai participates, he experiences a feeling of inadequacy and thinks himself a coward.

As we examine Nikolai's battlefield experience, we find him manifesting many of the classic symptoms of trauma: feelings of loneliness, inadequacy, loss of self-esteem, nostalgia, alienation, terror, nightmares, and depression. Nikolai is also resilient, in no small part because of the support he receives from his privileged position. There is enough camaraderie and reward (promotion), but also idealism and patriotism to get him beyond his fears. There is also rest, family, and home.

Sometime after Austerlitz, perhaps a month or so, Nikolai is given leave and arrives in Moscow in early 1806. We do not know what military activities Nikolai engaged in, if any, from the battle of Austerlitz (November 20, 1805) to the time he left on leave for Moscow (early 1806). Probably none. The French victory at Austerlitz effectively brought the Third Coalition to an end. On December 26, 1805 (NS), a treaty was signed that took Austria out of the war and gave Russian troops free passage home through French occupied territory.

This series of events is why Nikolai was given such a long leave. It was not until November 26, 1806 (NS), that Russian troops engaged the French again. It is difficult to know when Nikolai actually rejoins his regiment (Tolstoy gives conflicting dates), but he is on leave for at least twelve months. Tolstoy shows none of the fighting during the War of the Fourth Coalition. We learn of the poor conditions of the Russian troops sometime in

March 1807 and then move to the Peace Treaty of Tilsit on June 25, 1807, which followed a defeat of Russian forces on June 1, 1807, at Friedland. Nikolai might have participated in a few skirmishes during this time, but Tolstoy does not allude to them. He tells us only that the Nikolai did not participate in any of the major battles of the War of 1806–1807, including the decisive battle of Friedland (436). Denisov, taking a foolish risk, was slightly wounded during this period on a reconnoitering mission.

Nikolai is not a Vietnam veteran returning unwelcomed from an unpopular war. He is celebrated and welcomed by family, relatives, and friends.

On his return to Moscow from the army, Nikolai Rostov was welcomed by his home circle as the best of sons, a hero, and their darling Nikolenka; by his relations as a charming, attractive, and polite young man; by his acquaintances as a handsome lieutenant of hussars, a good dancer, and one of the best matches in the city. (326; PSS 10: 10)

He also begins to heal spiritually under influence of the “warm rays of his sister’s love, the childlike smile which had not once appeared on his face since he left home now for the first time after eighteen months again brightened his soul and his face” (323; PSS 10: 7). He reenters the childhood world, “which gave him some of the best joys of his life” (323; PSS 10: 8) and the only world in which true healing can occur.

Armistice and Tilsit

It is, however, precisely these emotional supports in Russia that are tested when Nikolai returns from leave to the army. For a while, Nikolai was having a superb time in Moscow, but his growing friendship with Dolokhov leads to unanticipated difficulties. He consents to serve as Dolokhov’s second in a duel with Pierre Bezukhov, and soon thereafter loses 43,000 rubles to his “friend” at cards, a loss

that exacerbates his family’s already deteriorating financial situation.

Volume two, part one begins with Nikolai’s excitement about finally reaching home; it ends with his desire to leave home as quickly as possible “without taking leave of any of his acquaintances” (373; PSS 10: 63). It is understandable why he now wants to leave home, but given his combat experiences in 1805, what could have made him eager to rejoin his regiment at a time of renewed hostilities with Napoleon? Tolstoy tells us that in his regiment Nikolai

experienced the same sense of peace, of moral support, and the same sense of being at home here in his own place, as he had felt under the parental roof. But here was none of all that turmoil of the world at large, where he did not know his right place and took mistaken decisions. (428–429; PSS 10: 124).

The order, routine, stability, and camaraderie he experiences in his regiment are far more reassuring than the shame and uncertainties he faced at home. He comes to think that his real home is his regiment. Nikolai intends now just to be a good officer and carry out his duties. It is difficult to say exactly what these duties are, but they probably involve foraging for supplies. Nikolai does not engage in any actual combat. His regiment (Petrograd) missed the main battles of the 1806–07 war at Pultusk in December 1806 and at Preussisch-Eylau in February 1807. He could not have taken part in many skirmishes, for by March of 1807, the narrator tells us, the regiment had lost many men to hunger and sickness, but only two in action. We also know that Denisov tries to expose Nikolai to danger as seldom as possible. It is precisely the terrible conditions of the Russian troops (hunger and sickness), not Nikolai’s own participation in combat, that sets in motion the trauma that strikes and demoralizes him from March to July of 1807.

Nikolai's trauma is preceded and influenced by the psychological breakdown (CSR) of his best friend and commanding officer, Denisov. Enraged by what he perceives as the mistreatment of the men under his command who are on the brink of starvation, Denisov commandeers several supply wagons destined for another regiment better off than his own. When called in by the staff to explain his mutinous, insubordinate behavior, Denisov loses his temper and goes berserk, severely thrashing two staff officers. Denisov admits that he would certainly have killed one of them had they not pulled him away.

When Denisov returns to camp, he cannot speak and is gasping for breath. He is in shock. Frightened, Rostov calls for the doctor, who has him bled. Soon thereafter Denisov exploits a minor bullet wound in the fleshy part of his leg to avoid appearing before the staff court. It seems even less serious than the arm injury that Rostov suffered at Schöngrabern. He goes to the hospital instead, where far more soldiers die than on the battlefield. It is here that Rostov, after an armistice has been declared, goes looking for his best friend.

The trauma Nikolai will experience is occasioned by his closeness to Denisov. Denisov is a *filos*, someone near and dear, just as Homer describes Patrocles' relationship with Achilles. "When returning from his leave, Rostov felt, for the first time, how close was the bond that united him to Denisov and the whole regiment" (428; PSS 10: 124). When Denisov, who had been asleep on his bed, sees Rostov he runs "all disheveled out of the mud hut to embrace him [...]. Rostov experienced the same feeling as when his mother, his father, and his sister had embraced him, and tears of joy choked him so that he could not speak" (428–29; PSS 10: 124). One of the Vietnam veterans that Jonathan Shay interviewed speaks in the same way of his relationship to the soldier in the unit who was closest to him: "It's closer than your mother and father, closer than your brother or your sister, or whoever you're closest with in your family" (40).

Nikolai arrives at the hospital in which Denisov is staying on a beautiful day, but there is devastation all around. The town has suffered severely during the fighting. The hospital, however, is far worse than any battlefield. When Nikolai enters, "he is enveloped by a smell of decaying flesh" (437; PSS 10: 132). When the doctor sees him, he wonders what he could be doing there. He is risking his life more certainly than in combat. There are four hundred patients in the hospital, and there would be many more if the dead did not quickly make room for new arrivals. The patients are in abominable condition without the barest of necessities:

Those who were conscious raised themselves or lifted their thin yellow faces, and all looked intently at Rostov with the same expression of hope, of relief, reproach, and envy of another's health [...]. He had not at all expected such a sight [...]. (438; PSS 10: 134)

One patient with a purple face is knocking the back of his head against the floor uttering something hardly audible. He is asking for water. Another soldier with a pale, waxen face and eyes rolled back sends a chill down Rostov's back. He has been dead since morning but has not been taken away. The soldier next to him says that everybody in the ward has been asking that he be taken out. "He's been dead since morning. After all we're men, not dogs" (439; PSS 10: 135). Such is the lot of the loyal soldiers who have been wounded in battle fighting for their country. Hardly any funds come from the Russian government. The hospital depends on the small gifts of the local Prussian residents. Tolstoy does not comment. Nikolai has seen the dead and wounded on the battlefield, but he is more roiled by the suffering he sees in the hospital. He is also morally outraged.

Nikolai then proceeds to the officers' wards where Denisov is staying. The conditions there are only marginally better. We find Captain Tushin there, the only real hero of the War of 1805 that

Tolstoy singles out. Denisov's wound has still not healed, but the real injury is to his sense of fairness and dignity. By contrast, when Nikolai suffered a slight arm injury in battle, he was awarded a medal for bravery, which he deserved no more than any of the other men in his unit. He furthermore recovered physically and mentally quite quickly. When Denisov is advised to petition the emperor directly for pardon, Denisov is indignant. He has served honorably. Why should he be degraded? Denisov is experiencing something similar to what Achilles, according to Shay, experienced. He served his country honorably only to suffer disgrace. After visiting Denisov, Nikolai's dejection grows. It is further exacerbated by the armistice and the peace treaty between France and Russia.

Nikolai takes on the task of submitting Denisov's petition for pardon in Tilsit. When he arrives, he suffers further disillusionment. He looks on in dismay as he sees French and Russian officers and diplomats fraternizing as though they had always been the greatest of friends. Like most in the Russian army, Nikolai still regards the French and Napoleon with antipathy and disdain. The culmination of his disillusionment, however, is the exchanging of gifts and amenities between the new allies, Napoleon and Tsar Alexander. Nikolai had idolized the tsar, the greatest love of his life. He is hurt when he hears the tsar's words refusing Denisov's petition, and then further demoralized witnessing Alexander's full participation in all the ceremonies honoring Napoleon. When the peace treaty is formally signed—with Russia and France now allies—and all the fraternizing and feasting continue, Nikolai goes into a funk. The world has lost all meaning.

Nikolai thus comes very close to many of Shay's soldiers suffering from a sense of betrayal, disillusionment, and the feeling that they have been radically changed by the events they have witnessed. Tolstoy conflates all the episodes of Nikolai's post-armistice experience as Nikolai observes from afar the celebration of the treaty:

Rostov stood at that corner for a long time, watching from a distance the men feasting. In his mind, a painful process was going on which he could not bring to a conclusion. Terrible doubts arose in his soul. Now he remembered Denisov with his changed expression, his submission, and the whole hospital, with the arms and legs torn off and its dirt and disease. So vividly did he recall that hospital stench of dead flesh that he looked round to see where the smell could be coming from. Next, he recalled that self-satisfied Bonaparte, with his small white hand, who was now an Emperor, liked and respected by Alexander. Then why those severed arms and legs and those murdered men? [...] Then he thought again of Lazarev rewarded and Denisov punished and unpardoned. He kept catching himself harboring such strange thoughts that he was getting frightened. (452; PSS 10: 149)

Nikolai leaves to get something to drink. He finishes a couple of bottles of wine by himself, but drink is insufficient to silence his tormenting thoughts. He interrupts a conversation in which Russian soldiers express their dissatisfaction with the armistice since they think they were just on the point of beating Napoleon. Although they have not mentioned the tsar, Nikolai starts shouting and speaks words to them that, with sarcastic irony, he is really addressing to himself.

"If we are ordered to die, we must die. If we are punished, it means that we have deserved it, it's not for us to judge. If the emperor pleases to recognize Bonaparte as Emperor and to conclude an alliance with him, it means it is the right thing to do. If once we begin judging and arguing about everything, nothing sacred will be left. That way we shall be saying there is no God—nothing," shouted Nikolai, banging the table—very little to the point as it seemed to his listeners, but quite in accord with the course of his own thoughts. (453; PSS 10: 150)

Tolstoy dramatizes the change that has taken place in his hero by setting the above passage against Nikolai's enthusiastic toast to the tsar before the battle of Austerlitz. In that other world, the greatest thing to do was to die before the eyes of the emperor.

Nikolai is the most patriotic of Tolstoy's protagonists in *War and Peace* and worshipful of the tsar. Unlike Pierre and Andrei, he rarely questions anything; this is the basis for Dmitry Pisarev's denigration of Nikolai's character. It is his youthful idealism that prepares the ground for his disillusionment, which occurs off the battlefield—in fact, after peace has been declared.

It is often the most idealistic that suffer the most from what they see in war. This trauma of the soul comes out vividly in many of Shay's interviews with Vietnam veterans. Caputo talks about many Vietnam recruits being "seduced into uniform" "by the missionary idealism" of the Kennedy years (xii).

Nikolai's trauma here is moral. Tolstoy also shows that the process by which Nikolai changes is gradual. It is not one dramatic event, as it might be in Dostoevsky, that brings about the change, but a series of smaller but escalating events that gradually undermine his idealism and violate his sense of justice. The condition of the common soldiers, the mistreatment of Denisov, the fraternizing of the French and Russian officials, and finally the reconciliation of Napoleon and his beloved tsar. In the end, Nikolai tries to drink to ward off his rebellious thoughts, but he is unsuccessful; he realizes that his only recourse is not to think about what he has seen, for to think about these things is to question the justice and meaning of everything, to understand that not only the common soldiers but the best fighting-line officers of the Russian army are nothing but cannon fodder and the playthings of diplomats and leaders.

Some have been unjustly dismissive of Nikolai's crisis at Tilsit, stating that he drowned his disillusionment in a few bottles of wine and soon was better. Pisarev (Писарев 10: 97–98) was

perhaps the first to express this view. He saw Nikolai as a representative of the bankrupt Russian aristocracy, whose moral and spiritual life ended at twenty when "all that remained to him was to grow more coarse and stupid, and then to become more decrepit and decay" (10: 98–99). R. F. Christian is equally dismissive. "The crisis, it is true, soon passes after a couple of bottles of wine" (175). Brody concurs:

Following the timeless example of Falstaff, he orders "another bottle"—*in vino veritas*—after which, we assume he will go peacefully to sleep. In spite of what had promised to be the beginning of a new wisdom and a dramatic catharsis, the opposite occurred. (115)

Tolstoy spends as much time with Nikolai as with his other male protagonists. His success with Nikolai lies in presenting in an artistically convincing way a man who is in no way extraordinary. In order to do this he must present his spiritual and moral development more subtly and over a longer period of time. This is the same method, as we shall see, that Tolstoy takes with Nikolai's war trauma.

Nikolai Rostov thus comes very close to many of Shay's traumatized soldiers suffering from a sense of betrayal and disillusionment and from the feeling that they have been radically changed not only by the events they have participated in but the events they have witnessed. Nikolai is not a rebel by nature and will never take his thoughts any further; but at this point, he is as close to the edge as any character in Tolstoy. He feels the same meaninglessness of existence that periodically plagues Prince Andrei and Pierre Bezukhov. If a loyal, patriotic, simple, unreflective man like Nikolai can be brought to this stage, then there is virtually no one who is immune to the trauma of war and the destabilizing thoughts it engenders. That is why the doubts of Nikolai about war may mean more in the end than the idiosyncratic

“combat” experiences of Pierre Bezukhov or Prince Andrei.

What can we conclude about the traumatic nature of Nikolai’s war experiences of 1805–1807? Tolstoy describes seven episodes leading up to his cynical tirade at the Treaty of Tilsit. On the bridge at Enns, Nikolai recognizes his vulnerability. The fear of death and the love of life combine to bring about a sickening agitation. He prays to God to preserve his life. At Schöngrabern, he barely escapes capture and suffers, it seems, as much from the trauma of his escape as from the excruciating pain in his arm, which may be in part a psychosomatic symptom related to the psychological trauma. At Austerlitz, he experiences terror for his own life, but he is also a horrified witness to the slaughter and suffering of hundreds of Russian soldiers.

Nikolai is resilient. As we have seen, he recovers from each incident, it seems, because of his support system among his fellow officers, the rewards and promotions he gets for his combat experiences, and a home leave in which, at least initially, he experiences great love, even adulation. He almost comes to believe in the stories he makes up about his battle prowess.

Nikolai, however, experiences his greatest wartime demoralization and disillusionment outside of combat. After he returns from leave to active duty, his regiment does not participate in any of the three major battles of the War of 1806–07. Yet he is more traumatized by what he witnesses off the battlefield than on it, and by what has happened to others, not to himself. For Nikolai at least the trauma of war arises more from disillusionment, the destruction of ideals, than from the feelings of personal vulnerability. This was a commonly reported experience in the Vietnam War for those soldiers who volunteered out of idealism, love of country, and devotion to a cause. The greatest blows they often sustained were to their moral integrity. It is not hard to understand, then, that Nikolai’s trauma results less

from his battlefield experience than from his relatively uneventful stint with the army in 1806–07.

Nikolai’s battlefield experience could have developed into PTSD, but the incidents were few (three) and, except for the incident at Schöngrabern, they were similar to what almost all other soldiers experienced during these battles.

We know that the incidence and severity of PTSD depend on the frequency and intensity of the traumatic events. In *A Rumor of War*, Philip Caputo describes daily patrols carried out over months in which he and his men had to deal with booby traps, sniper fire, a hidden enemy, intense heat, enervating humidity, filth, leeches, stench, body sores, sleep deprivation, hunger, military incompetence, and the frequent death of close companions (*filoi*).

The main causes of combat trauma differ from war to war. In Vietnam, there were very few large battles but almost constant exposure to danger for combat soldiers. In the War of 1805, there were only a few battles, but they involved terrible carnage, as was the case with Austerlitz. Yet, even under the conditions Caputo depicts, some soldiers did not experience debilitating chronic PTSD. We cannot say why. Nikolai’s battlefield experience and tribulations during the armistice take their toll because Nikolai is much more sensitive than critics usually allow. In the end, he does not succumb to disillusionment and depression.

Tolstoy presents Nikolai as an average man. Most average men will recover if they are not maimed, if they are not subjected to the kind of intense, unrelenting battlefield experiences so characteristic of twentieth-century warfare, the kind of warfare that began with the bombardments of Sevastopol—and if they, in addition, receive the psychological and physiological supports that Nikolai continually does, especially when he returns home.

Healing and Home

After we leave Nikolai in despair at Tilsit, we meet him again in only one (part four) of the three remaining parts of volume two. But there he is the center of attention. Tolstoy shows us another important stage of Nikolai's recovery, at home, from his low point at Tilsit. From June 1807 at Tilsit until Nikolai returns home again in September 1810, all Tolstoy says about him is that he "was still serving modestly in an obscure regiment." We have no information about Nikolai having taking part in any combat after the armistice in 1807, although he could presumably have seen action in the Russo-Turkish War from 1806–12. In any case, Nikolai would not have left his refuge away from home, his regiment, had he not gotten desperate letters from his father about the family's deteriorating financial situation. In fact, Tolstoy intimates that the best place for Nikolai's *initial* healing to take place after Tilsit might have been his regiment.

If man could find a state in which he felt that though idle he was fulfilling his duty, he would have found one of the conditions of man's primitive blessedness. And such a state of obligatory and irreproachable idleness is the lot of a whole class—the military. The chief attraction of military service has consisted and will consist in this compulsory and irreproachable idleness. Nikolai Rostov experienced this blissful condition to the full when, after 1807, he continued to serve in the Pavlograd regiment, in which he already commanded the squadron he had taken over from Denisov. (537; PSS 10: 237)

After 1807, the regiment seems to have engaged in no fighting, and it presented Nikolai with none of the difficulties and anxieties that he associated with home, including, among others things, his family's financial situation, Natasha's engagement to Prince Andrei, and his delicate relationship with Sonya. No longer exposed to danger, without cares,

Nikolai has plenty of time for rest and entertainment. His whole life is ordered and regulated. He does not even have to think. It is understandable then why he is so distressed that he must return home, "that he must go away from this good, bright world to somewhere where everything was stupid and confused" (539; PSS 10: 239). That is, his real home.

Tolstoy shows that Nikolai's real healing occurs not in the regiment but at home. The interwar regimental period of blissful idleness is nothing more than a postponement of the necessary adjustment he needs to make to be more fully integrated in his native country on his ancestral estate. He, of course, encounters again the same difficulties from which military service was shielding him, but he also discovers the deeper truths of home, a magic kingdom that can be compared only to the fullest childhood happiness. He revels in several hunts, which he sees as an opportunity of overcoming his major unlucky reverses at cards and at war. "Everywhere, at cards and at war, I am always unlucky" (550; PSS 10: 251). He prays to God. "Only once in my life to get an old wolf. I want only that" (550; PSS 10: 251).

That instant, when Nicholas saw the wolf struggling in the gully with the dogs, while from under them could be seen her gray hair and outstretched hind leg and her frightened choking head, with her ears laid back (Karay was pinning her by the throat), was the happiest moment of his life. (552; PSS 10: 253)

He equally revels in Natasha's dancing and singing, in Christmas celebrations, and in the kisses of a transformed Sonya with a cork mustache and eyebrows. He discovers a place where he is not the hunted, as he perceived himself to be at Schöngrabern, but where he is the hunter. It is a place that he longed for when he experienced his greatest trauma on the battlefield, when he was hallucinating from excruciating pain and dreaming

of his mother, Natasha, warmth, comfort, and childhood, the most blissful time of life.

Nikolai's second leave at home (1810–11) is different from his first. On his first leave, he was eager to return home. He met with adulation, praise, and acclaim. He led a carefree existence. However, as we have seen, things soon turned sour: His relationship with Sonya made him uneasy, he became involved as a second in a duel, and he did considerable damage to his family's already declining fortunes. When he returned from leave, he reached the depths of despond at Tilsit.

The second leave presents its own problems. Nikolai was unable to put the family's finances in order. He actually made things worse. His mother and father were putting pressure on him not to marry Sonya, with whom he had become more infatuated than ever before.

Yet, despite all this, this time, he lays the foundation for a new life at home, where he now understands the greatest happiness must reside, for he has found something that takes him back to his childhood. He has intimations of the home he dreamed about when he was recovering from the trauma of Schöngrabern. Going to meet Sonya during Christmas time, his bosom seems "to inhale not air but the strength of eternal youth and gladness (583; PSS 10: 286). He "inhaled the frosty air with a full breast and, looking at the ground flying beneath him and at the sparkling sky, felt himself again in a magic kingdom" (583; PSS 10: 287). It is a very different wintry, snowy night than the one five years before at Schöngrabern. Recovery from trauma for Nikolai cannot take place away from home. It must take root at home. Nikolai is preparing for the final healing.

Ostrovna and Retirement

Tolstoy leaves Nikolai for his other male protagonists, Pierre Bezukhov and Prince Andrei, for a long time. We hear nothing about Nikolai until, about eighteen months later in the late spring of 1812 and before the renewal of hostilities

between Russia and France, he receives a letter from his parents asking him to retire from the army and return home. In contrast to the past, what Nikolai now wants most of all is to return home. He also wants, against his parents' wishes, to marry Sonya. The regiment is no longer his true home. War has now become not the fulfillment of desire but its impediment. "Believe me, directly the war is over, if I am still alive and still loved by you, I will throw up everything and fly to you, to press you forever to my ardent breast" (715; PSS 11: 54).

Why the change? As Tolstoy makes clear, it is all because of the previous return home from leave:

The autumn in Otradnoe with the hunting, and the winter with the Christmas holidays and Sonya's love, had opened out to him a vista of tranquil rural joys and peace such as he had never known before, and which now allured him. "A splendid wife, children, a good pack of hounds, a dozen leashes of smart borzois, agriculture, neighbors, service by election [...]" thought he. (715; PSS 11: 54).

The true remedy from the traumas of war is the pastoral joys of home. In 1820, the ideal that Nikolai still holds most close to his heart is to make enough money to buy back the ancestral estate, Otradnoe. "In another three years, by 1820, he had so managed his affairs that he was able to buy a small estate adjoining Bald Hills and was negotiating to buy back Otradnoe—that being his most cherished dream" (1271; PSS 12: 254).

Nikolai's turn towards home and away from military service is partly due to the change in his understanding of combat and how one should comport oneself on the battlefield. At the start of hostilities in 1812, the Russians are retreating, and Nikolai's regiment seems never to have engaged the enemy. Its main "military" activity has been the usual foraging among the local population. Tolstoy mentions that until

Ostrovna Nikolai had not heard the sound of bullets for a long time. (723; PSS 11: 62)

The older and wiser Nikolai, who is now head of a squadron, has essentially adopted Tolstoy's views on war. War is not how it is described by those who participate in and lie about it, as he himself had done. At the very least, one should not take unnecessary risks. One should never jeopardize one's own kin in battle.

And why expose his own children in the battle? I would not have taken my brother Petya there, or even Ilyin, who's a stranger to me but a nice lad, but would have tried to put them somewhere under cover. (717; PSS 11: 56).

Rostov does his duty and lives as well as he can. He is not eager for combat. He has learned to deal with the fear of death by not thinking about it.

In his next and last battle, at Ostrovna (July 25, 1812), Nikolai is again exhilarated by the prospect of combat. Caputo describes the same feeling of excitement about going into battle after having not having experienced combat for a long time. Prominent among his reasons for requesting a return to the front line was the attraction to fighting.

I cannot deny that the front still held a fascination for me. The rights or wrongs of the war aside, there was a magnetism about combat. You seemed to live more intensely under fire. Every sense was sharper, the mind worked clearer and faster. (231)

Nikolai seems to contain his agitation by likening the field of battle to his hunting experience the year before: "With the same feeling with which he had galloped across the path of a wolf, Rostov gave rein to his Donets horse and galloped to intersect the path of the dragoons' disordered lines." By imagining his participation in the battle as a hunt, Nikolai is able to perform his role almost unconsciously. "He acted as he did when hunting, without reflecting or considering" (724; PSS 11:

63). Tolstoy seems to make the battle scene at Ostrovna mimic in reverse Nikolai's experience at Schöngrabern, in which the horses play a major role. Rostov charges and his horse dashes into the horse of the fleeing French dragoon, knocking the dragoon to the ground. Nikolai half-heartedly strikes the Frenchman with his sword, causing a superficial wound to the arm. The Frenchman's foot is caught in the stirrup. He is just as helpless as Rostov was at Schöngrabern.

Nikolai will ultimately be rewarded for his bravery, but he finds out that though being the wolf is obviously better than being the hare, it certainly is not morally so.

Rostov galloped back with the rest, aware of an unpleasant feeling of depression in his heart. Something vague and confused, which he could not at all account for, had come over him with the capture of that officer and the blow he had dealt him.

The soldier he tried to kill was a man like himself, not an enemy. He had "a dimple in his chin and light-blue eyes." He feels "a vaguely disagreeable feeling of moral nausea" (725; PSS 11: 64)—and shame. The following day Nikolai is silent, thoughtful, and preoccupied, preferring to remain alone.

From Schöngrabern, he understands the situation of the hare: He had earlier felt the same terror that he sees in the eyes of the French soldier he has captured. Now he also understands the moral dimension of being the hunter in war. Attempting to kill another human being can be as traumatic as the fear of being killed.

He does not get drunk as he did at Tilsit, but instead begins to ask himself questions. He asks why he received a medal of honor for heroism when he was afraid; whether he did it for his country; whether his enemy, who was just like himself, was at all to blame; and whether he should have even tried to kill him. Still confused, he never comes to any resolution of any of these questions.

Receiving the St. George's Cross for his action only makes him feel more troubled by his actions, however half-hearted they were.

Seven years ago, he could have easily been that Frenchman, when he, Nikolai, was caught under his horse, his arm injured, and seemingly unable to flee. The French soldier brings back the trauma of seven years ago, and adds to that the trauma of having almost killed a man so like himself.

By contrast, Dolokhov, at least at times, enjoys attacking the retreating French army with no good reason, according to Tolstoy, other than for the sake of inflicting casualties: "Earlier a commander had said of him. One day he is sensible, well educated, and good-natured, and the next he's a wild beast [...]. In Poland, if you please, he nearly killed a Jew" (124; PSS 9: 144). Nikolai is different and, Tolstoy implies, more typical. Dolokhov perhaps is more like the Gabriel's prototypically "insane" soldier who will probably never experience PTSD (30–31).

Ostrovna was Nikolai's last battle. Nikolai will perform any assignment required of him; it would be dishonorable, even unthinkable, for him to do otherwise. He has no qualms now about not fighting when he does not have to. When, before the battle of Borodino, he is ordered to go back to Russia to requisition horses, he has no compunction in carrying out this commission. Tolstoy presents Nikolai's behavior as understandable and irreproachable.

As the war had caught him in the service, Nicholas Rostov took a close and prolonged part in the defense of his country, but did so casually, without any aim at self-sacrifice [...]. He learned that he was being sent to Voronezh to buy remounts for his division, not only without regret at being prevented from taking part in the coming battle, but with the greatest pleasure—which he did not conceal and which his comrades fully understood [...]. Only a man who has experienced it—that is, has passed

some months continuously in an atmosphere of campaigning and war—can understand the delight Nicholas felt when he escaped from the region covered by the army's foraging operations, provision trains, and hospitals [...]. In the highest spirits, Nicholas arrived at night at a hotel in Voronezh, ordered things he had long been deprived of in camp, and next day, very clean-shaven and in a full-dress uniform he had not worn for a long time, went to present himself to the authorities. (1046; PSS 12: 15)

Tolstoy does not deal in any detail with Nikolai's other military service in 1812 or any time thereafter. While in Voronezh, he feels himself increasingly attracted to Princess Maria and finds out that he is no longer bound by his vows to Sonya. He returns to duty about a month after the Battle of Borodino, sometime at the end of September 1812. We hear nothing more about Nikolai until the first epilogue, in which we learn that he was with the Russian army in Paris when he received the news of his father's death. The earliest this could have been was March 1814. He resigns his commission and goes home to see to the disposition of the heavily indebted estate. We can assume that Nikolai saw some action from the time he rejoined the Russian army in September 1812 to the time the army entered Paris in 1814. Tolstoy does not need to fill in any details because he has already told us how Nikolai conducts himself in battle: He does his duty and does not unnecessarily expose himself to risk. He seems not to have experienced any significant trauma.

Though Tolstoy does not foreground Nikolai's trauma and recovery, Nikolai, nevertheless, resembles the majority of soldiers who have had combat experience, some of it traumatic (such as Nikolai's escape at Schönggrabern), and who are nonetheless able to reintegrate into civilian life and lead normal, productive lives. The goal for the average soldier, after combat and trauma, is to

survive intact, maintain integrity, and preserve the confidence necessary for life's later challenges. All this Nikolai does, becoming an exemplary landowner, husband, and father.

As we have seen, there are reasons why Nikolai is able to do so, especially in light of the experience of line soldiers in the wars of the twentieth century. In 1805 Nikolai had only three combat experiences. One cannot make light of them, especially the escape at Schöngrabern. In contrast to combat experience in more modern war, Nikolai was not on patrol every day for weeks on end, in unspeakable conditions, with little food, rest, or water or under daily bombardment, as Tolstoy himself was at Sevastopol.

PTSD is caused as much by the frequency of the trauma as by its intensity. Nikolai spent most of his time in the army having a good time. After his combat experience in 1805, he did not have another battlefield experience until 1812, and then only one engagement. Nikolai also had a strong support network in the army and at home. He was an officer from a prominent family. He was promoted even for behavior he himself was ashamed of. He was thought highly of by his fellow officers. In Moscow, he was a Russian war hero. His parents and siblings idealized and adored him. In addition, on his last leave he discovered a magic kingdom on his estate that gave meaning to, and a goal for, the rest of his life. He learns that the cure for nostalgia is homecoming.

Last of all, Nikolai was fortunate. Nikolai claims that he is unlucky in cards and war. In cards, yes; in war, no. He is not killed on the bridge at Enns. He narrowly escapes capture or death both in Schöngrabern and Austerlitz. He takes part in none of the battles of 1806–07. He is not present at Borodino. His only injury is a sprained arm and shoulder.

Nikolai's brother, Petya, by contrast, dies in his first skirmish. Prince Andrei suffers much more serious wounds. He barely recovers from his first wound, which he incurred at Austerlitz in 1805.

The wound has still not completely healed five years later (569; PSS 10: 271). It is because of his wound that he is not able to return to Russia sooner. Had he done so, his engagement to Natasha would not have been called off. His next injury at Borodino, from which he suffers excruciating pain over many weeks, is fatal, which makes it possible for Nikolai to marry Princess Maria.

Nikolai is the average man as survivor. He has his close calls in battle. He witnesses terrible carnage. At Tilsit, when his ideals about war and heroism are shattered, he nearly experiences a complete breakdown. He recovers both in his regiment and at home. He suffers PTSD, but it is not debilitating and it is not chronic. Like most soldiers with his combat experience, he goes on to live a normal life. We hear little of such soldiers today. We hear of the casualties, both the physically and psychologically wounded, of which there are far too many. The Vietnam vets that Shay worked with were the ones who were unable to return to the life that they led before. Nikolai represents a different story and probably a more common one. It is story in which trauma is suffered but overcome. His spiritual wounds heal.

Tolstoy's artistic success is that he makes Nikolai's readjustment and success credible, makes it work aesthetically. Trauma does not impair Nikolai's ability to live a full life. In the end, it has a beneficent effect on him. It makes him a better soldier and commander. It may also make him a better husband, father, and yes, horrible to say, owner of serfs.

Notes

For quotations from *War and Peace*, I have used the Maude translation. I have checked the translation with the original and made changes where necessary. References to the novel are cited first in the English translation, followed by the Russian source.

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